

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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TENNESSEE MAN SENTENCED FOR FRAUD OFFENSE

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that James Boswell, age 50, of Memphis, Tennessee, having pled guilty to mail and wire fraud, odometer tampering and false odometer statement, was sentenced to 5 months' imprisonment and 5 months home detention with electronic monitoring followed by 3 years of supervised release, a special assessment of \$400 and full restitution to Metro Chrysler Centre in Columbia, Illinois, Daimler-Chrysler Corporation and other victims. Mary Boswell, age 52, wife of James Boswell, was sentenced on the same charges to three years' probation. These defendants are among 19 individuals from Memphis, Tennessee charged in the Southern District of Illinois with having engaged in trading vehicles with false odometer readings.

These crimes took place in October and November, 2003 in Monroe, Bond and Lawrence Counties, Illinois. The defendants were traveling self employed painters who lived in a community known as Irish Travelers.

According to matters of public record, these defendants were charged in a scheme which involved buying a new vehicle by trading a vehicle on which the odometer had been disconnected. The scheme involved approximately 20 vehicles in Illinois, with an average loss of more than \$10,000 per vehicle. Additional vehicles were traded in Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Texas and Tennessee, with total losses to car dealerships in all states in excess of \$413,000. The victimized car dealerships in Illinois included Steve Schmitt Motors in Greenville, IL; Metro Chrysler in Columbia, IL; and Westport Chrysler in Lawrenceville, IL. Investigators pointed out that as these dealerships learned of the scam, they were quick to notify and make whole those customers who had purchased the tampered vehicles from each dealership.

In addition to the nineteen arrests, 17 pick up trucks with a total appraised value of \$278,525 were seized from the defendants and have been processed for forfeiture. Full restitution was ordered in each case. Law enforcement has also worked with this Memphis based travelers community to encourage disclosure of unknown mileage on many other vehicles owned by members of the community.

Information for the indictments was obtained in an investigation led by United States Postal Inspection Service, which was assisted by the Illinois Secretary of State Police, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau. The cases were prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Michael J. Quinley and Michael Thompson